

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6359

As Passed Senate, February 15, 2010

Title: An act relating to promoting efficiencies including institutional coordination and partnerships in the community and technical college system.

Brief Description: Promoting efficiencies including institutional coordination and partnerships in the community and technical college system.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development (originally sponsored by Senators Kilmer, Becker, Shin and Tom).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Higher Education & Workforce Development: 1/19/10, 1/27/10 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/15/10, 47-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6359 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kilmer, Chair; Kastama, Vice Chair; Becker, Ranking Minority Member; Hewitt, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Pflug, Shin, Stevens and Tom.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Washington's Community and Technical College Act of 1991 provides for a state system of community and technical colleges separate from both the public secondary schools and four-year institutions. Each college district is required to "offer thoroughly comprehensive educational, training and service programs to meet the needs of both the communities and students served by combining, with equal emphasis, high standards of excellence in academic transfer courses; realistic and practical courses in occupational education, both graded and ungraded; community services of an educational, cultural and recreational nature; and adult education." There are currently 34 community and technical colleges in 30 community college districts (three multiple campus districts).

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (College Board) sets policy direction for the community and technical college system in collaboration with colleges and

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other system partners. It advocates for and allocates state resources to the colleges. The College Board is required to provide "general supervision and control over the state system of community and technical colleges." Among its specific responsibilities the College Board must: (1) prepare a single system operating budget request and capital budget request for consideration by the Legislature; (2) disburse capital and operating funds appropriated by the Legislature to the college districts; (3) administer criteria for establishment of new colleges and for the modification of district boundary lines; (4) establish minimum standards for the operation of community and technical colleges with respect to personnel qualifications, budgeting, accounting, auditing, curriculum content, degree requirements, admission policies, and the eligibility of courses for state support; and (5) prepare a comprehensive master plan for community and technical college education.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill: College districts must coordinate their educational, training, and service programs with other colleges within a regional area. Basic skills, occupational, and technical training can take place in all community and technical colleges. The College Board has the responsibility and duty to ensure coordination between college districts. Community and technical colleges must avoid unnecessary duplication in student services and administrative functions. The State Board, involving boards of trustees, administration, faculty, employee union, students, and community representatives must identify potential administrative efficiencies, complementary administrative functions, and complementary academic programs in colleges within a regional area and must identify, develop, and adopt plans for the implementation of any changes to ensure that they meet specified criteria. Colleges are also to consider greater flexibility for students to transfer credits and obtain degrees and certificates from other colleges within the region. Cost savings are retained by the college districts to enhance student access and success. A preliminary progress report must be submitted to the appropriate legislative committees and to the Governor by December 2010. A final report is due by December 2011.

The College Board, in consultation with boards of trustees at the colleges, establishes criteria and procedures for consolidating district structures to form multiple campus districts. Primary consideration is given to how proposed changes would affect student access, faculty recruitment and retention, and the expected financial efficiencies. By December 2012, the College Board must evaluate any proposed district consolidations or boundary changes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: Colleges are currently doing a good job, this is meant to help the College Board as they administer the system. Many efforts are already underway to start this process. The bill is consistent with the College Board mission study. We are already making progress toward shared programs, courses, and administrative functions. Washington community colleges have a proven track record of low per-student administrative costs. Some district boundaries are 40-years old, so now is an

appropriate time to take a look and see if they need modification. Boundaries may be losing some of their meaning in the digital age.

OTHER: Care should be taken to preserve the local flavor of specialized programs. The timeline may be too short.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kilmer, prime sponsor; Charlie Earl, College Board; Peter Crane, trustee, Olympic College; Donna Steward, AWB; Pamela Transue, president, Tacoma Community College.

OTHER: Bernal Baca, AFTWA.